



US Army Corps  
of Engineers ®  
Portland District

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

### Double-crested Cormorant Management Plan to Reduce Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River Estuary Clatsop County, Oregon

CENWP-PM-E-15-01

Issue Date: February 6, 2015

Expiration Date: March 16, 2015

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District (Corps) is making available for public review the *Double-crested Cormorant Management Plan to Reduce Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River Estuary- Final Environmental Impact Statement* (FEIS). The Corps has evaluated four action alternatives in the FEIS outlining management strategies to reduce double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) predation impacts on juvenile salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.) and steelhead (*O. mykiss*) in the Columbia River Estuary. The FEIS is available on the Corps webpage in the Documents section at [www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS](http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS).

The proposed management plan in the FEIS was developed to comply with reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) action 46 in the 2008 and associated 2010 and 2014 Supplements to the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries). Over the past 15 years, double-crested cormorants on East Sand Island in the Columbia River Estuary have consumed on average approximately 11 million juvenile salmonids per year, although total consumption varies each year and by salmonid population.

The Corps is the lead agency for the FEIS under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321–4347. In developing the plan, the Corps has worked closely with the following cooperating agencies: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Proposed Action:** In the FEIS, the Corps is proposing to reduce the double-crested cormorant colony size from current levels (approximately 13,000 breeding pairs) to approximately 5,600 breeding pairs on East Sand Island. To accomplish this, the Corps is proposing to implement a management plan that includes shooting individual double-crested cormorants and oiling eggs in nests, along with hazing and integrated non-lethal methods to reduce the colony size over a period of 4 years. Shooting is proposed on East Sand Island and over water from boats. Annual regional monitoring would occur to assess the impacts of the proposed action to the western population of double-crested cormorants. Information gained from this monitoring would be used to adjust future actions through an adaptive management strategy.

Once the management objective for colony size is attained (approximately 5,600 breeding pairs), the Corps is proposing to modify the terrain of East Sand Island on the western portion of the island to reduce the available nesting habitat for double-crested cormorants. This would occur by excavating sand on the western portion of the island to inundate it with tidal flows and placing rock armor along the northern shore to ensure stabilization of the island. To prevent immigration and growth of the colony, the Corps would monitor and perform hazing and monitoring as necessary.

**Agency Decision:** The Corps will make a decision on the proposed action, to be described in a record of decision (ROD), thirty days after publication of the notice of availability of the FEIS in the Federal Register. The Corps will make the ROD available to the public and it will identify all of the alternatives considered, state what the Corps' decision regarding a double-crested cormorant management plan is, identify all of the alternatives considered, and state whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted. If the Corps makes a decision to implement an action alternative, the Corps will submit a depredation permit application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after making the ROD available and request assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services to directly assist the Corps in implementing the management plan. Pending the Corps' decision described in the ROD, implementation of the management plan is tentatively scheduled for spring of 2015.

**Review Timeframe:** The FEIS will be available for public review for thirty days after publication of the notice of availability in the Federal Register by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This period is anticipated to begin February 13, 2015 and end March 16, 2015. Written comments may be sent electronically or by traditional mail to:

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